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January 27, 1995

Ms. Barbara Gregory, Editor
THE NUMISMATIST
American Numismatic Association
913 North Cascade
Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279

Dear Barbara:

In the January 1995 NUMISMATIST (p. 17-18), you published an interesting article by Curt Wood describing an insertion about British coinage design in ^{THE} GENTLEMEN'S MAGAZINE for March 1795 written by "Obadiah" without further identification. Mr. Wood wants to know who Obadiah was. I believe he is Obadiah Westwood, a British token manufacturer. Obadiah Westwood is mentioned in Thomas Jefferson's correspondence relating to U.S. coinage (see Don Taxay, U.S. MINT AND COINAGE, p. 53-54). There is more material on Westwood if Mr. Wood wishes to follow it up.

I hope I have been helpful.

Cordially,

Eric P. Newman

appear to be offers of BU coins from the United States government.

Leon D. Curtis, LM 4666

Collector Finds "Kinsman" in Rare Magazine

In order to prevent its being lost to numismatic history, I wish to share an excerpt from a letter I recently discovered in a nearly two-centuries-old British publication, *The Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1795). Topics covered in the monthly periodical were of general interest, so any mention of numismatically related material was highly unusual.

Unfortunately, the letter's author identified himself only as "Obadiah," thus preventing our ever knowing his full name. However, he shared some new ideas for the improve-

ment of then-current designs on British coinage.

He begins by commenting on the copper halfpenny tokens then circulating widely in England, Scotland and Ireland (he does not mention the fact that at the time it was a great fad to collect these tokens—the first widespread incidence of "coin collecting" among the general populace that I am aware of). While not approving of the use of the tokens, Obadiah concedes that the coppers are superior in workmanship to government coins.

As to the future of copper tokens, Obadiah was forthcoming with his opinion:

Whenever the din of War (with France) is over, which I sincerely pray may be soon, let those who are in authority, and to whom it be-

longs, encourage a Matthew Boulton, and totally suppress the Birmingham counterfeits and the tradesmen's tokens altogether.

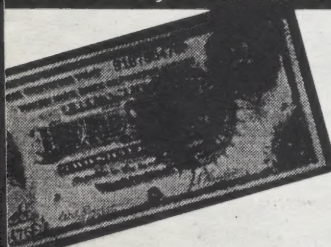
Turning then to the possible new designs for British coinage, Obadiah states:

The guinea might present a figure of Liberty, as the most precious of our possessions, and worthy of the analogy of gold; the legend might be THE GUARDIAN OF BRITAIN. On the half-guinea suppose an image of Fortitude, THE GUARDIAN OF LIBERTY. The crown-piece might bear Liberty, Agriculture, and Commerce, UNITED TO BLESS. The half-crown, the king, a peer, and a commoner, emblematic of our happy constitution, with the legend UNITED TO PROTECT. The shilling might be charged with a ship of war convoying a merchant

vessel, WEALTH AND POWER; the six-pence with an oak in a storm, STRONGER FROM THE TEMPEST. The half-penny may remain as it is with regard to the impression, only doubling the size of the coin; the Britannia should hold a trident in her right hand, and let the other recline upon the helm of a ship, instead of holding both aloft with impertinent articles in each; a posture very Gothic and unknown to the ancients . . . The farthing, of the size of our present half-penny, might present an husbandman sowing, with this legend, BY INDUSTRY SMALL THINGS GROW GREAT. This would answer for the general dies; and historical subjects, as they occur, should be added.

As far as I know, Obadiah's recommendations constitute the first instance in history of a private citi-

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zen recommending in print a variety of coinage designs to the government. My own reaction is that Obadiah is somewhat a numismatic kinsman of mine. As one who has recommended that the United States adopt a Statue of Liberty design for its next circulating dollar coin ("Member Proposes Design for Obverse of Dollar Coin," October 1993, p. 1336), I can identify with the spirit that moved him to write his letter so many years ago.

Curt Wood, ANA 150617

Thumbs Up to ANA Presidential Award Recipient

I was pleased to see Larry Gentile Sr. listed among the Presidential Award recipients in the November installment of "ANA Chronicle"

("Honorees Contribute to the Hobby in Many Ways," p. 1523). A few years ago, my daughter became a junior member of the Association, and we have ventured to many coin shows and exhibits. The first educational forum we attended (in Baltimore) was hosted by Mr. Gentile, and I have to say, the Presidential Award is most befitting this fine, talented individual.

On behalf of all the young members, and parents, who have benefited from Mr. Gentile's wealth of information, kindness and genuine concern for young numismatist programs, we gratefully stop, tip our hats, and say, as always, "Thank you, Larry. You are truly appreciated!"

Frank Wagner and
Danielle Wagner, J 162054

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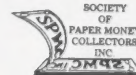
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